



Town of Garner NEWS RELEASE

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Media Contact: Rick Mercier,
Communications Manager
Phone: (919) 773-4418
Email: rmercier@garnernc.gov

Hodges to Fill New Assistant Town Manager Position

Garner Revitalization Association (GRA) Executive Director John Hodges has been tapped to serve as the Town's new assistant town manager for development services. He will assume his new role on Nov. 10.

The position Hodges will fill is a new one. It was approved in the fiscal year 2014-15 operating budget as part of a reorganization of the Town Manager's Office. Hodges will join Town Manager Hardin Watkins and Assistant Town Manager-Operations Rodney Dickerson as a three-person leadership team to guide the 11 Town departments and facilitate the various Town initiatives outlined in the Town's Strategic Action Plan.

Hodges has served the Garner community since 2007 as GRA executive director where he led the Main Street program, implemented and promoted the Historic Downtown Garner Plan and served the Board of Directors in the organization's efforts to revitalize and improve the heart of the community. Hodges' prior career included corporate sales management of information technology and software solutions for 15 years and operation of a family-owned small business for nine years.

"I believe that John will bring an impressive amount of enthusiasm, ability to get things done and knowledge of the intricacies of the Garner community to our leadership team," Town Manager Watkins said. "Rodney and I are looking forward to having John join our leadership team as we tackle an exciting list of major projects and initiatives that will shape Garner for the future."

"I am honored to be named as the new assistant town manager-development services for the Town of Garner," Hodges said. "I have enjoyed my tenure leading the Garner Revitalization Association and working to revitalize Garner's original downtown district to its highest and best economic potential. I am very proud of the accomplishments we have made, and I am especially proud of the community support for our mission that has been demonstrated through participation in our events, investments

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made in the district and support for the Downtown Redevelopment Bonds passed in 2013.

“I am excited about the opportunity to expand my role with the Town and to help the development services departments work cohesively and efficiently to encourage, enable and sustain positive growth for Garner.”

Under the reorganization of the Town Manager’s Office, Hodges will be responsible for the Planning, Engineering, Economic Development and Inspections departments and will serve as the liaison to GRA, the Garner Economic Development Corporation and the Garner Chamber of Commerce. He will also be responsible for the Town’s construction project management as a function area of the Engineering Department.

Assistant Town Manager-Operations Dickerson will be responsible for the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources, Public Works and Information Technology departments. His areas of responsibility will also include issues pertaining to safety, insurance, risk management, the citizen request tracking system, legislative liaison, the Google Fiber project, economic incentives policy coordination and coordination of all Town Council committees.

Town Manager Watkins will be directly responsible for the Police, Human Resources and Finance departments, as well as the Town Clerk’s Office, communications manager, budget and special projects manager and the assistant town managers. His bailiwick also will include Council/Mayor relations, the budget, internal audit and special projects, and he will be liaison to the town attorney, N.C. League of Municipalities and other regional partners of the Town.

Hodges’ track record while at GRA includes leadership and involvement with some high-profile projects that have been influential in shaping Garner’s future: achieving National Main Street Center accreditation; strategizing for the inclusion of multiple downtown improvements in the successful 2013 bond referendum; co-leading the successful 2013 All-America City campaign; acquiring 25 properties in the downtown area for future development; writing complex grant applications; organizing successful downtown promotional events such as concerts and a food truck rodeo; implementing the townwide wayfinding sign program; leading the development of the Historic Downtown Garner Plan and facilitating construction of multiple improvements downtown including sidewalks, signage and a playground.

Hodges is a graduate of East Carolina University with a bachelor’s degree in business administration. He has also completed continuing education programs at Duke University in non-profit management and the UNC School of Government in leadership strategies for results.

One of Hodges’ early tasks as assistant town manager will be to work with the GRA leadership to identify and select a new downtown manager to backfill the role he is departing.

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